

Serial No. 09/433,380
Amendment dated May 17, 2005
Reply to Office Action of April 1, 2005

Docket No. MRE-0014

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 10-22, 24, and 27-30 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the Abstract and claims 22 and 27-28 are amended, and claims 25-26 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter is added. Withdrawal of the rejections in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amended claims is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 since the amendments: (1) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (2) do not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration (since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution without incorporating additional subject matter); (3) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; and/or (4) place the application in better form for appeal (if necessary). Entry is thus requested.

The Examiner is thanked for the indication that claims 10-21 and 30 are allowed, and that claims 26-28 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Independent claim 22 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 26 and intervening claim 25. Thus, independent claim 22, as well as claims 24 and 27-29, which depend therefrom, should be in condition for allowance. Further, because all of pending claims 10-22, 24, and 27-30 are in condition for allowance, the application should also be in condition for allowance.

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The Office Action objects to the Abstract due to an informality. The Substitute Abstract filed herewith is responsive to the Examiner's comments. Accordingly, the objection should be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 22-25 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,518,361 to Smith. Claims 23 and 25 are canceled. The rejection, in so far as it applies to claims 22, 24, and 29, is respectfully traversed.

As set forth above, the subject matter of allowable claim 26 and intervening claim 25 has been incorporated into independent claim 22. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 22 is not anticipated by Smith, and thus the rejection of independent claim 22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Smith should be withdrawn. Rejected dependent claims 24 and 29, as well as objected to claims 27-28, are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 22, from which they depend, as well as for their added features.

CONCLUSION

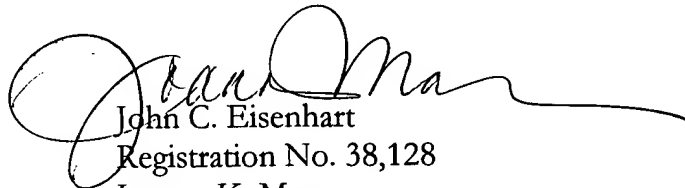
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned, **JOANNA K. MASON**, at the telephone number listed below.

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To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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